GUIDELINES DEALING WITH HANDLING BODY FLUIDS IN SCHOOLS

The following guidelines are meant to provide simple and effective precautions against transmission of disease for all persons exposed to the blood or body fluids of any student. No distinction is made between body fluids from students with a known disease or those from students without symptoms or with an undiagnosed disease.

A. RISK OF CONTACT WITH BODY FLUIDS

The body fluids of all persons should be considered to contain potentially infectious agents (germs). The term "body fluids" includes blood, semen, drainage from scrapes, vaginal fluid, cuts, feces, urine, vomitus, respiratory secretions (e.g. nasal discharge), and saliva. Contact with body fluids presents a risk of infections with a variety of factors including the type of fluid with which contact is made and the type of contact made with it.

Body fluids with which one may come in contact usually contain many organisms, some of which may cause disease. Furthermore, many germs may be carried by individuals who have no symptoms of illness. These individuals may be at various stages of infection; incubating disease, mildly infectious agents including the AIDS and hepatitis viruses. In fact, transmission of a communicable disease is more likely to occur from contact with the infected body fluids of unrecognized carriers than from contact with fluids from recognized individuals because simple precautions are not always carried out.

B. AVOIDING CONTACT WITH BODY FLUIDS

When possible, direct skin contact with body fluids should be avoided, disposable gloves should be available in at least the office of the custodian, nurse, and principal. Gloves are recommended when direct hand contact with body fluids is anticipated (e.g. treating bloody noses, handling clothes soiled by incontinence, cleaning small spills by hand). If extensive contact is made with body fluids, hands should be washed afterwards. Gloves used for this purpose should be put in a plastic bag or lined trash can, secured, and disposed of daily.

C. WHAT TO DO IF DIRECT SKIN CONTACT OCCURS

In many instances, unanticipated skin contact with body fluids may occur in situations where gloves may be immediately unavailable (e.g. when wiping a runny nose, applying pressure to a bleeding injury outside the classroom, helping a child in the bathroom). In these instances, hands and other affected skin areas of all exposed persons should be routinely washed with soap and water after direct contact has ceased. Clothing and other non-disposable items (e.g. towels used to wipe up body fluid) that are soaked through with body fluids should be rinsed and placed in plastic bags. If presoaking is required to remove stains (e.g. blood, feces), use gloves to rinse or soak the item in cold water prior to bagging. Clothing should be sent home for washing with appropriate directions to parents/guardians (see Laundry for Clothing Soiled with Body Fluids, Section I). Contaminated disposable items (e.g. tissues, paper towels, diapers) should be handled with disposable gloves.

D. REMOVAL OF BODY FLUIDS

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Schools have standard procedures for removing body fluids (e.g. vomitus). These procedures should be reviewed to determine whether appropriate cleaning and disinfection steps have been included. Schools stock sanitary absorbent agents specifically intended for cleaning body fluid spills.

Disposable gloves should be worn when using these agents. The dry material is applied to the area, left for a few minutes to absorb the fluids, and then vacuumed or swept up. The vacuum bag or sweepings should be disposed of in a plastic bag. Broom and dustpan should be rinsed in a disinfectant. No special handling is required for vacuuming equipment.

E. HAND WASHING PROCEDURES

Proper hand washing requires the use of soap and warm water and vigorous washing under a stream of running water for approximately 10 seconds.

Soap suspends easily removable soil and microorganisms allowing them to be washed off. Running water is necessary to carry away dirt and debris. Rinse under running water. Use paper towels to thoroughly dry hands.

The contaminated surface should first be cleaned with soap and water. This initial step should be followed by cleaning with an intermediate level disinfectant. It is recommended by the Communicable Disease Control Branch of North Carolina, Division of Health Services, that disinfectants be left on the contaminated surface from 2-10 minutes before removal.

Hypochlorite solution (bleach) is preferred for objects that may be put in the mouth. Various classes of disinfectants are listed below.

- Ethyl or isopropyl alcohol (70%);
- Phenolic germicidal detergent in a one percent (1%) aqueous solution;
- Sodium Hypochlorite with available chlorine (1/2 cup household bleach in 1 gallon water; needs to be freshly prepared each time it is used); and
- Hydrogen Peroxide Solution (3%) (should be fresh solution each time it is used).

F. DISINFECTION OF HARD SURFACES AND CARE OF EQUIPMENT

After removing the soil, a disinfectant is applied. Mops should be soaked in the disinfectant after use and rinsed thoroughly or washed in a hot water cycle before rinse. Disposable cleaning equipment and water should be placed in a toilet or plastic bag as appropriate. Non-disposable cleaning equipment (dustpans, buckets) should be thoroughly rinsed in the disinfectant. The disinfectant solution should be promptly disposed down a drain pipe. Remove gloves and discard in appropriate receptacles.

G. DISINFECTION OF RUGS
Apply sanitary absorbent agent, let dry, and vacuum. If necessary, mechanically remove with dustpan and broom, then apply rug shampoo (a germicidal detergent) with a brush and re-vacuum. Rinse dust pan and broom with disinfectant. If necessary, wash brush with soap and water. Dispose of non-reusable cleaning equipment as noted in Section F.

H. LAUNDRY INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLOTHING SOILED WITH BODY FLUIDS

The most important factor in laundering clothing contaminated in the school setting is elimination of potentially infectious agents by soap and water. Addition of bleach will further reduce the number of potentially infectious agents. Clothing soaked with body fluids should be washed separately from other items. Presoaking may be required for heavily soiled clothing; otherwise, wash and dry as usual. If the material is not colorfast, add 1/2 cup of non-chlorine bleach.

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